

# **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF EARLY GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY GRADUATES**

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This thesis examined the effects of participation in early graduate education programs on retention among 1988-1996 United States Naval Academy (USNA) graduates. The comparison group of non-participants consisted of USNA graduates in the top 200 on the Order of Merit in order to make the academic background similar to participants. The retention behavior of program participants and non-participants was compared to determine if granting early graduate education had an effect on retention to six years of service (one year beyond the minimum required service). For a pooled sample of all graduates, both the Voluntary Graduate Education Program (VGEP) and Scholarship program had positive effects on retention. The cost-benefit analysis found positive net benefits for VGEP, but a net-loss for the Scholarship program. However, while the analysis includes all costs, it omits some of the non-quantifiable benefits of the programs. If these benefits were quantified and included, it is expected that both programs would yield positive net benefits. Minor changes to the additional service requirements for both programs were recommended.

**KEYWORDS:** VGEP, Scholarship, Graduate Education, Logit, USNA, Order of Merit, Minimum Service Requirement, Cost-Benefit Analysis